

which was made in 1907, comprises fifteen species, eight of which had not been previously known from the island, and which bring the total number of its bird fauna up to 26.

Seven of the forms represented in Dr. Abbott's collection prove to belong to undescribed races which are here named and diagnosed by Mr. Oberholser as follows: *Spilornis bassus baweanus* (p. 185); *Sauropatis chloris cyaneescens* (p. 189); *Strix baweana* (p. 190); *Microtarsus atriceps abbotti* (p. 193); *Malacocincla abbotti baweana* (p. 194); *Gracula javensis baweana* (195); and *Anthreptes malacensis baweanus* (p. 196).

In a footnote Mr. Oberholser discusses the question of family names and argues that the name Bubonidæ should not be changed to Strigidæ simply because the name *Strix* (of earlier date than *Bubo*) is found to be applicable to the genus formerly known as *Syrnium*, and hence takes its place in the family Bubonidæ. In other words a family should take its name, not from the oldest generic name in the family but from the genus upon which the family was originally founded. It follows that the family name need only be changed when the name of the "type genus" is changed. This seems to be a sound argument and if followed will avoid some very undesirable and misleading changes.—W. S.

#### Wetmore on Secondary Sexual Characters in the Ruddy Duck.<sup>1</sup>—

In dissecting some Ruddy Ducks Mr. Wetmore was able to verify the statement, first made by Macgillivray, that in this species the *bulla ossea* usually present in the trachea of the males of river and sea ducks, was entirely absent. Carrying his investigations further he discovered a remarkable tracheal air-sac which is used when the males are displaying during the mating season. The presence of this sac is responsible for the full and loose condition of the skin of the neck in this species, which renders it possible to slip the head through it when skinning a specimen, something which is quite impossible in our other ducks. Upon examining skins of other members of the subfamily Erismaturinæ he found the same condition of the neck skin in other species of *Erismatura* as well as in *Thalassornis* and *Nomonyx*.

Mr. Wetmore's studies are particularly welcome as we are badly in need of more knowledge of the anatomy of birds in arriving at a true understanding of their systematic relationships. The field is a large one but for some reason or other has not been attractive to ornithologists. We hope that Mr. Wetmore may receive every encouragement to continue his investigations along these lines.—W. S.

**Mathews' 'Birds of Australia.'**<sup>2</sup>—The first part of volume six which is now before us begins the treatment of the Parrots, a group of birds

<sup>1</sup> On Certain Secondary Sexual Characters in the Male Ruddy Duck, *Erismatura jamaicensis* (Gmelin). By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 52, pp. 479-482. February 8, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. VI, Part I. November 22, 1916.